DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 393 557 PS 023 993

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TITLE New Expectations: Community Strategies for Responsible Fatherhood.
INSTITUTION Families and Work Inst., New York, NY.
REPORT NO ISBN-1-888324-00-7
PUB DATE 95
NOTE 229p.
AVAILABLE FROM Families and Work Institute, 330 Seventh Avenue, 14th Floor, New York, NY 10001 ($22 plus $3.50 shipping and handling).
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) -- Books (010)

EDRS PRICE Document Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Change Strategies; Childhood Needs; *Child Rearing; Child Support; Child Welfare; *Community Role; Early Parenthood; Family (Sociological Unit); Family Life; Family Problems; Father Attitudes; *Fathers; Legal Responsibility; *Parent Child Relationship; Parent Participation; *Parent Responsibility; *Parent Role; Social Responsibility
IDENTIFIERS *Paternity Establishment

ABSTRACT

Recognizing that approaches to solutions for irresponsible fatherhood may be grounded in either our legal and economic systems or the moral climate--or both, this book focuses on what can be done to strengthen families and improve the lives of children by encouraging responsible fatherhood. The introduction describes a man who behaves responsibly toward his child and family as one who: (1) waits to have a baby until he is prepared emotionally and financially to support his child; (2) establishes his legal paternity if and when he does make a baby; (3) actively shares with the child's mother in the continuing emotional and physical care of their child, from pregnancy onward; and (4) shares with the child's mother in the continuing financial support of their child, from pregnancy onward. The introduction also outlines a strategic framework for responsible fatherhood which consists of prevention (of early fatherhood), preparation (for the legal, financial, and emotional responsibilities of fatherhood), establishment (of paternity), involvement (of fathers in childrearing, and the community's role in fostering involvement), and support (actively supporting fathers in their many roles). The three sections of the book, (1) "Rethinking Fatherhood," (2) "Community Strategies," and (3) "Resources," elaborate on these themes. Contains approximately 250 references. (DR)

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